



Red Butterflies



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Chapter 1 by Anna Cook

Grace:

I stared at the four shiny white walls surrounding me. I knew where I was. Of course I knew. It was the place I had spent hours researching about every night for months on end. The place that when I heard I was being sent to, I screamed and cried and bit my mother over. This place was Ashen River Insane Asylum. I didn't understand why I was sent here. I also didn't understand why there were red butterflies flying around my room all the time. And most of all, I didn't understand why whenever I looked at someone their arms started falling off. Suddenly I screamed. For no reason. I just wanted to see if anyone would come. Sure enough three "helpers" came running to my assistance. As I listened to the sound of the high tech door being unlocked, I let out a bloodcurdling scream just to make them more scared of me. They finally bursted through the door with panicked looks on their faces. I grimaced as they walked towards me with the straight jacket in their hands. Suddenly I started shrieking, (for real this time) as one by one the "helpers" arms started to peel off their bodies in the most gruesome way possible. I whimpered and darted away from them right before they could touch me. I shut my eyes tightly. Little voices in the back of my head said odd things like "We need the diabolical portion

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I tried to keep my eyes focused on the road as I drove to Ashen River Insane Asylum. I was going to visit my sister Grace. A lot of things made me angry about that place, but the most aggravating was the name. I mean why do they have to call it Ashen Rivers?! It is so depressing. It's like they want their patients to feel hopeless. I feel so bad for her. She's only 15 and I, her brother, am 19. I attend University of Washington here in Seattle. It was only last year that Grace even moved to Ashen River. Although it was long overdue. We knew she had severe mental illness from the age of 6, and it only got worse as she got older. She has severe separation anxiety, so anytime we even mentioned the possibility of Ashen River to her, she completely flipped out. Some nights she would just cry and cry without stopping. One time she even bit our mom over the idea. But it didn't draw any blood, and I know how much Grace loves her.

It had just started raining when I pulled into the parking lot of the asylum. A got out of my car and hurried to the front office where the usual lady greeted me and reminded me of Grace's room number, as if I had forgotten. I walked quickly through the hall. I had to admit, this place kind of creeped me out. I opened the tightly bolted door to find her asleep on the floor. Her condition jolted me. Her face was pale white and she was dangerously skinny. Her once luscious blonde hair was now completely chopped off and was more a grayish brown. I quietly kneeled down beside her and put my hand on her shoulder. The second my fingers touched her she shrieked and flailed around. Typical response. But when she saw that it was me, she brightened and wrapped her bony fragile arms around me tightly. I realized that she was crying. "I hate it here!" she sobbed.

"I miss Gretchen, and I miss home."

I still didn't understand why she called mom by her first name. "Mom misses you too, Grace, but she knows that you are better off here." She whispered something under her breath that I couldn't make out. "Grace? Are you okay?"

"Look at the upper right hand corner, Jesse!!!! Do you see it??!!!"

I didn't know what to do. She clearly saw something frightening, but it just looked like a normal wall to me. Should I pretend I saw something? Do I tell her she is hallucinating? Suddenly she

shouted, "The wolves! The wolves are coming home!"

I had no idea what she was talking about. "Subject 101, please stop shouting." I heard the

"Hey Grace let's go get some food." I heard the

"OK," she said, dozed.

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We walked downstairs, my arm linked with hers. Maybe she just needs a little love. I can't even begin to imagine what terrible things they must have done to her to make her like this.

Grace:

As Jesse and I walked through the pine trees and sprinkling rain to the dinning room, I thought about how I could escape. The entire facility was surrounded by snowy mountains and pine tree forests. And It rained all the time. I didn't even know how to to drive. If I had any chance at escape I would have to ask someone from the city to come and get me. I pondered all of this as we approached the modern redwood dining room of torture. I couldn't help but be paranoid about the crimson blood splattered across the streets. I stopped abruptly and bent down to touch it, but right before my fingers brushed against the gory surface, my vision went black and I was frozen with fear. In the corner of my right eye I thought I saw a flutter. Suddenly the entire black canvas that had surrounded me was overflown with thousands and thousands of tiny red butterflies. It was beautiful, but scary at the same time. A loud voice in the back of my head told me to run or the wolves would come home. So I ran. I ran as fast and hard as I could. My entire being was engulfed in darkness. All of the sudden, my head smacked against something hard and incredibly painful

Jesse:

We never exactly made it to the dining room. Grace had an attack, and it was one of the worst ones in a while. Right after she hit the tree, I brought her to the urgent care building. She had split her head open and was bleeding profusely. She was going to need immediate care and possibly surgery. I was so scared for her, but there was no reception up here and I had to get back to the city and call mom. I got in my car and got out of that place as fast as I could.

2 weeks later...

Grace:

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the forests, over the mountains, and through the busy streets of the city until I reached my house. I opened the door and there I saw my mother. She smiled and said, "Welcome home, Grace."

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